

favorite time of the year, Ashe agreed to be interviewed by the TimesDaily on June 27, provided the story would not be released until after his death.

His message on that hot, overcast day came in the form of a challenge to Sheffield residents to keep the city moving forward.

"This city has come so far in such a short period of time," Ashe said. "There's no reason we cannot continue in this direction when I'm gone."

"There's a sense of pride that has returned to Sheffield. People are proud to say they're from Sheffield again. I know it means something special to me to tell people where I live. God, I love this place."

That love and pride for his hometown is perhaps the biggest legacy Laughlin Ashe leaves. Ashe's enthusiasm is credited by many as one of the single biggest factors that made Sheffield a city on the move again.

To have heard him talk, you would, think the city is headed toward unprecedented growth.

"We have feelers out in every direction," Ashe said. "We've on the verge of some extremely big things, and slowly but surely we're going to get there."

Ashe downplayed his role in the revitalization of Sheffield, and he made repeated efforts not to point fingers at anyone from past administrations. Instead, he praised the City Council, which he said has done "an unbelievable job," and the residents who "feel as deeply about the city as I do."

"When I was running for office, Sheffield had gotten into a rut," Ashe said. "People were not negative but they certainly weren't positive, either. That kept us in that rut."

Change came subtly but quickly, a product of a joint effort between the council and Ashe.

WE'RE BUSINESSLIKE

We were fortunate enough to have six brand new people with no political experience to come into office at one time," Ashe said. "Not a single one of us knew that something couldn't be done. We didn't understand there was no way to get from one point to the other. So, we just did it."

"We don't have the pizzazz that Florence does with their nearly \$20 million budget, we don't have the little hint of scandal that may sometimes trouble Muscle Shoals where you have this faction hollering at another faction, and we don't have that little smoke like what's coming out of Tuscumbia. We've business-like. We discuss the issue and 20 minutes later we're out of there."

Ashe saw his role as one of a cheerleader. While promptly dealing with the negatives, Ashe focused on the positive things in Sheffield. It's an attitude that proved to be contagious.

"During these past three years, we have uncovered a lot of those needs and started serving them," he said. "When you get down to it, you provide the basic services and the rest is attitude."

"And hell, yes, our image has improved. I base that on what people say to me, my family and the council. The attitude has improved. The way to discover that is by driving through our neighborhoods like York Terrace, the Village and Rivermont and you'll see people building onto their houses and taking pride in their property."

During the Ashe administration, the city has attacked the problem of rundown houses and property that has gone unattended by landowners. Several of those eyesores have been torn down, at a cost of about \$10,000 per project.

That condemnation process is far from complete, according to Ashe. Singling out a property owner on Columbia Avenue, he said the face-lift ultimately will include the re-

moval of some house trailers and other unsightly residences.

Ashe also talked at great length about the council's ability to update equipment for the street and cemetery departments, while improving resources for the police and fire departments. Sheffield's 101 city employees have been given another raise, marking the third straight year they have received pay increases.

"We got behind during the level times of the 1980s, and we're still not where we want to be," Ashe said. "We have lost three or four top-notch police officers over the last month or so. We can't afford to keep them. We get them trained in the academy and then on the streets, and then they go to Muscle Shoals or Florence for a \$5,000 raise. And I don't blame them."

The purchases and raises are products of an improved economic and retail base. Ashe credited Sheffield businessmen Bob Love and Tony McDougal for initiating some of that growth before the 1992 election. The influx of restaurants in the city has revitalized downtown.

A REASON TO COME

"The thing Sheffield had been missing for so many years was a hook, a reason for people to come to the city," the mayor said. "There had been no real reason to come into Sheffield unless you had a specific purpose. We don't have the upscale anything for shoppers. Restaurants are changing that. They're giving people a reason to come into our city."

Ashe forecast that the crowning jewel of Sheffield's revitalization will be a promised overpass that will allow motorists to travel to Sheffield without fear of being delayed by passing trains at the Montgomery Avenue crossing. Despite the belief among some residents that the overpass will never be built, Ashe never wavered.

"I still go to bed at night and say my prayers and thank God this overpass is coming," he said. "This overpass is going to do more to change Sheffield positively as Woodward Avenue did in Muscle Shoals."

"We're going to have a business route again, and we're going to have traffic flow through here that made this town back in the '50s and earlier years. Once the traffic flow starts, the retail and commercial portions will come. We have some people already beginning to think in those terms."

Sheffield's long-range plan includes the development of an office park near the intersection of Nathan and Hatch boulevards, a project that will tie in with the Old Railroad Bridge walking-trail system. The city also is working on a softball-baseball complex.

As Ashe put it, "We've got so many things in the cooker it's hard to keep up with." That's why he asked the council to hire an assistant to the mayor during his final months, so he could make that person aware of those projects. The council responded by hiring Linda Wright, who will now play a role in the transition to a new mayoral administration.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, more than 3 years ago I began daily reports to the Senate to make a matter of record the exact Federal debt as of close of business the previous day.

As of the close of business Wednesday, November 1, the Federal debt stood at exactly \$4,981,703,482,414.58. On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,910.63 as his or her share of the Federal debt.

It is important to recall, Mr. President, that the Senate this year missed

an opportunity to implement a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Regrettably, the Senate failed by one vote in that first attempt to bring the Federal debt under control.

There will be another opportunity in the months ahead to approve such a constitutional amendment.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, is there 30 minutes reserved for the minority leader or his designee?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DORGAN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

CLASS WARFARE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, yesterday, I was on the floor of the Senate discussing the reconciliation bill and discussing some other issues, including trade issues, and I was confronted, once again, with the rejoinder that a discussion of the type that I was having was class warfare. I responded to that at the time. But I was thinking about this last night as I was reflecting on the discussion we had.

I thought to myself that it is interesting because every time you talk about the economic system in this country and who it rewards and who it does not reward, who it penalizes and who it does not penalize, somebody says you are talking about class warfare. What a bunch of claptrap, to call a discussion about economic strategy in this country and who benefits "class warfare."

Here is what I said yesterday. I was relating it to the reconciliation bill, a bill that, not me, but a Republican strategist said largely takes from those who do not have and gives to those who do.

I was reading an article written by John Cassidy, which I thought was interesting. He talks about the economic circumstances in our country. He said that if you were to line up all Americans in a row, with the richest American far on the right and the poorest American far over here on the left—line all Americans up in one row—and then go to the middle American, the one right in the middle, the average, and that middle American standing in the middle of that line would be a working American, who earns, on average, \$26,000 a year.

His article pointed out something I pointed out to the Senate previously, which I think relates to why people are sour in this country and why they are upset about where we are headed. He pointed out what that person making \$26,000 a year, that working family there making \$26,000 a year, has experienced in this country.